

## Exit Interviews: Why Did You Leave?

Employees leave organizations for many reasons, such as accepting another job offer, moving to another area, taking care of personal issues, and retirement. These can be good reasons for leaving. However, when an employee leaves for reasons attributable to the organization, it is a good idea to delve into those issues and look for ways to improve.

Exit interviews conducted with employees when they leave an organization are a cost-effective tool that can be used to gather information about what an organization is doing well, and how an organization can improve.

Information that can be obtained through exit interviews includes:

- Work environment
- Managerial style
- Day-to-day work issues
- Employee morale
- Feedback about benefits

According to *HRinfodesk.com*, “Exit interviews can be used to gather information which can then play a part in preventing future employees from leaving the company, and improving the organization’s overall working environment. By keeping track of the outcomes of exit interviews over time, employers can begin to identify trends and patterns as to why people leave the company. Employers can also determine whether turnover is higher in certain positions and departments, whether there are management issues in certain areas, and whether the organization is offering remuneration which is in line with the competition.”

Taking the information received through the responses of former employees and reviewing that information is essential for an organization to move forward. It is important for an organization to not

overreact to the response of one individual, but to look for overall patterns and trends. This information should be shared with management, and collective decisions should be made on how to evaluate the information and take action. It has been found that when this information is thoughtfully acted upon, the positive results are immeasurable.

Further, exit interviews also highlight what organizations are doing well, and what is looked favorably upon by employees.

Of course, exit interviews are not the only time that an organization should be gathering this type of information. Regular conversations between supervisors and employees should help to bring issues, both good and bad, to light. These frequent conversations are the backbone of the FACE of Performance program adopted by Pinellas County last year.

The Human Resources Department asks former employees to complete an online exit interview within the month they leave employment. This information is reviewed to identify where former employees believe the County is doing well, and to pinpoint areas in which the County can make improvements.

Valuable information is gleaned from exit interviews, the biannual Employee Survey, FACE of Performance conversations, as well as informal two-way, everyday communication between supervisors and employees. Using all of these resources, Pinellas County supervisors can take steps to reduce employee turnover, improve recruitment and selection practices, promote increased employee morale, and continue to improve the work environment for all employees.